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PC.DEL/80/23
26 January 2023

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1408th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 January 2023

International Holocaust Remembrance Day

Mr. Chairperson,

On 27 January 1945, the Red Army liberated the largest concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau (Oświęcim). Around four million people were exterminated in this factory of death, including around one million Jews. In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 27 January as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The Holocaust claimed the lives of six million Jews, 40 per cent of whom were citizens of the Soviet Union. The Soviet people lost more than 26 million of their fellow citizens in the war with Nazi Germany. Preserving the historical memory of those terrible events is, without exaggeration, a global task.

Speaking of which, just before the commemoration, the news broke that Russia had been excluded from the ceremony marking the 78th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, which will take place on 27 January. The announcement was made by Piotr Cywiński, director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum in Poland.

We consider this a blatant mockery not only of historical memory and the elementary rules of decency but also of common sense. Indeed, it will be interesting to see who will be honoured at the event as a liberator in the absence of a Russian delegation.

On 27 January 1944, the inhuman siege of Leningrad, one of the bloodiest pages of the Second World War, was finally lifted. As with the Holocaust, it was a massive and targeted extermination of civilians.

Mr. Chairperson,

Very alarming trends of increasing anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial have been observed in our Organization's area of responsibility, along with the glorification of Nazism and neo-Nazism both by national authorities and by the external handlers of certain countries or territories.

Most revealing in this respect is the policy of the Kyiv regime's masters, who hypocritically turn a blind eye to the cultivation of neo-Nazi sentiment in Ukraine. We regularly bring this up at meetings of the Permanent Council and have no intention of repeating ourselves. Here are a few recent examples of the glorification of Nazism and the falsification of history. In December 2022, the Ukrainian Supreme Court upheld the decision that the symbols of the infamous SS Division Galicia were not related to Nazism. In doing so, the regime, in essence, questioned the judgment of the Nuremberg Tribunal.

On 1 January this year, as is tradition, the anniversary of the birth of Stepan Bandera was once again celebrated on a grand scale at the State level in Ukraine. Torchlight marches were held in Kyiv and a number of other cities across the country in honour of this Ukrainian nationalist, who has on his conscience the death of tens of thousands of Ukrainians, Russians, Poles and Jews.

The situation in Kosovo is typical of the way the United States of America cultivates hateful ideas. This year's budget for the territory envisages 300,000 euros for the restoration of the house of Nazi collaborator Xhafer Deva in Kosovska Mitrovica. He was Minister of the Interior in the puppet government of Albania during the German occupation of 1943 and 1944, in other words, a high-ranking collaborator who was personally responsible for the mass executions of members of the anti-fascist movement and civilians, the deportation of the Jewish population to concentration camps and the recruitment of personnel for the Albanian SS Division Skanderbeg.

In February 2022, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme prudently withdrew from the project following the publication of articles and posts on this issue and the international outcry, including from respected Jewish organizations. Restoration work has been suspended.

However, the authorities in Priština are determined to see this through to the end. By casting Nazi criminals as quasi-historical leaders of the Albanian national movement, the Kosovans continue to shape their identity around the egregious henchmen of Xhafer Deva, known as the Hitler of Kosovo.

Unfortunately, this kind of manifestation is clearly fostered and encouraged by the United States and European Union member countries, which last December for the first time voted in solidarity at the United Nations General Assembly against Russia's annual resolution against the glorification of Nazism, something only the United States and Ukraine had done systematically in the past. Now all EU countries have joined them at the behest of the authorities in Brussels. One might ask what conclusions can be drawn from such a position.

Mr. Chairperson,

The problem of anti-Semitism in the OSCE area likewise remains acute. In the United States, according to the non-governmental organization Anti-Defamation League, 20 per cent of Americans hold anti-Semitic views and believe in anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. This is almost double the result of a similar survey in 2019 and the highest in 30 years.

Last week, the respected Jewish Agency for Israel reported a number of anti-Semitic incidents at US universities. It is estimated that the proportion of anti-Semitic manifestations on campuses has increased by almost 50 per cent, from 160 in the academic year 2021 to 230 in 2022. Similar trends can be observed in the other OSCE participating State across the ocean as well – Canada.

According to the British NGO Campaign Against Antisemitism, which analysed the January statistics from the UK Home Office, Jews are over five times more likely to be the victims of hate crimes [than any other faith group]. Over the past two years, 1,919 crimes of this kind have been committed against

them. This is a record. Similar trends have also been noted in a report entitled “Anti-Jewish Hatred” by the UK Government’s independent adviser on anti-Semitism, Lord John Mann, and in a report by the charity Community Security Trust (CST).

Germany is not free of anti-Semitism either. According to data from the Federal Criminal Police Office in October 2022, 1,555 anti-Semitic attacks, including violent ones and those displaying neo-Nazi symbols, had already been recorded in the country at the time.

In the Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – gatherings and torchlight processions take place in honour of those who actively collaborated with the Nazis and were accomplices in their crimes. A campaign for the destruction of Soviet war memorials and the sacrilegious desecration of fraternal war graves continues apace. A policy of State vandalism is being openly implemented in relation to the symbols of the victory over Nazism.

In Estonia, against the background of the cynical suppression of the memory of the soldiers who liberated the country from Nazi enslavement during the Second World War, history falsifiers are honouring the Forest Brothers, the nationalist thugs who terrorized the civilian population in the post-war years. On 8 December 2022, some of these “heroes” were reburied in the borough of Kose, and a memorial was inaugurated in their honour. Significantly, the ceremony was organized with the participation of the country’s official authorities.

This serves as confirmation that attempts to deny the Holocaust and to spread racism, Nazism, neo-Nazism and racial intolerance pose a direct threat to peace and security. We note the intention of the OSCE Chairmanship of North Macedonia to devote its first event in the human dimension to combating anti-Semitism. In that context, we should like to reiterate the urgency of taking neo-Nazism into account when deciding on the agenda of OSCE human dimension events.

Thank you for your attention.